The Hot Springs of Ulu Jelai.

By A. D. Machado.

Having recently occasion to visit the extreme Ulu of the Jelai district, Pahang, in connection with certain prospecting operations which I was then undertaking for the Malayan (Pahang) Exploration Co., I heard from Sakai aborigines of the existence of hot springs in this neighbourhood. These springs I found to be situated on one of the spurs of the main range of hills dividing Pahang from Perak, about Latitude 4° 20′ N., and Longitude 101° 30′ E. Our Sakai guide, who visited this spot ten or more years ago, described the phenomenon as one eruptive fountain of hot water and steam—the water, according to him, ascending to a considerable height, a true Geyser in fact. I saw quite a different thing. I found seven non-eruptive springs of hot water and steam, the former flowing over sloping terraces or basins of granitic boulders, till finally they joined on to a stream called the Chá-âng, which in turn drained into the Jelai. If the statement of the Sakai is credible, and I have no reason to disbelieve him, there has evidently been a change in the structure of these springs, within the short space of ten years, a very short geological epoch indeed. The usual characteristic sulphurous odour pervaded this place; those curiously fretted rims of the boulders over which the water flowed, due doubtless to the deposition of Silica, sulphur, etc., are also noticeable here. Wild animals, elephants, rhinoceri, deer, etc., visit this spot periodically, judging by their old and fresh tracks, probably for their saline properties, while the Sakais hold this place in great awe and veneration. They seemed quite unable to account for this phenomenon, all the explanation they could give being that they thought it was the work of "hantus." These springs are, in their geological formation, similar to those visited by me in Maliwun, Lower Burma, in Renong, Siamese Malaya, and in other parts of the Malay Peninsula; though, in point of size and importance,

they approximate those of Ojigoku in the Hakone district of Japan.

I feel here tempted to say a word in regard to this little-known district of Ulu Jelai. Doubtless for services rendered, the whole of this district has been assigned, or rather alienated by the Pahang Government to the Datoh Maharaja Puba of Jelai, otherwise and better known as the Toh Raja Jelai, who alone has the right to exploit it. With the exception of a dozen Malays, dependents of Toh Raja, who live at a place called Kwala Betok, the furthest Malay outpost up the Jelai, this district is inhabited exclusively by Sakais. These Sakais plant hill paddy for the Toh Raja and tapioca root for themselves, and do in consequence much unnecessary destruction to valuable timber forests. The ten or a dozen Malays at Kwala Betok have established a kind of an octroi or tithes station, where they exact from the Sakai their pound of flesh for the privilege of cultivating Toh Raja's land, though, to do the Sakais justice, they try by all kinds of subterfuge to evade the payment of these dues—a case of "diamond cut diamond." These Malays will tell you that the Sakais are cunning, unreliable and great cheats; while the Sakais, on the other hand, will tell you that the Malays are hard task-masters, are cruel and merciless—a case again of the "pot calling the kettle black." Taken all in all, this district is fairly rich in economic and mineral products. Rattans are plentiful, and so is Kayu Gaharu (*Aquilaria Malaccensis*) in a lesser degree, while Gutta of almost every description abounds, Gutta Rambong (*Ficus Elastica*) growing wild in places. Of minerals, gold is known to exist; indeed, I have only just located two lodes, which I have my reasons to hope may eventually pay to work. On the Betok, a stream which takes its rise in Ulu Lipis, and which drains into the Jelai at the aforesaid Kwala Betok, having an equal volume of water with the latter stream, tin ore is extremely plentiful and easy to work; so much so, that there is reason to believe that before long a very thriving mining centre will spring up in this corner of the Jelai. The Jelai River, in its upper reaches, abounds in gorges and rapids, formidable obstructions to navigation, thus nullifying its utility as a highway. To those who are venturesome, a descent in bamboo rafts affords exciting experiences.